

You Cannot Be Harmed

Consciousness is affected by experience but not harmed. It is the nature of aware consciousness to be affected by everything it experiences. Every color and sound, every event and experience, and every passing thought or feeling affects your consciousness. That is why we call it consciousness. A rock isn't as affected by these things, so we consider a rock less conscious than a person.

And yet, consciousness is not harmed by anything. That is its nature, that it can't be harmed. The form of anything can be harmed or permanently changed. Your body can be harmed, but the consciousness that contains your body cannot be harmed.

This is good news. It's like a "Get out of Jail" card in Monopoly. No matter what happens, you, as consciousness, are completely unharmed. What a relief! There is nothing that can harm you. No one and nothing has ever harmed you.

This is not to say that consciousness isn't affected deeply by both the good and bad things that happen to us. Every hurtful and unkind act leaves an impression in the consciousness of those involved. It's just that the impression doesn't permanently limit or damage the awareness of those involved. If something permanently affects us, it could be said to have harmed us. But if the effect is temporary, then what is the ultimate harm? Everything that profoundly affects our awareness, from the beautiful to the tragic, eventually passes. It is the miracle of our consciousness that it can heal from any wound, even if our body cannot.

What you are is eternal, aware space, or consciousness. You have a body, but you are not that body. So while your body can be permanently harmed, just like your car or camera can be, you as consciousness eventually heal or recover from every experience that has affected you. Even if the effect lasts for lifetimes, eventually it is diminished and disappears. From the perspective of something eternal, even many lifetimes isn't that long.

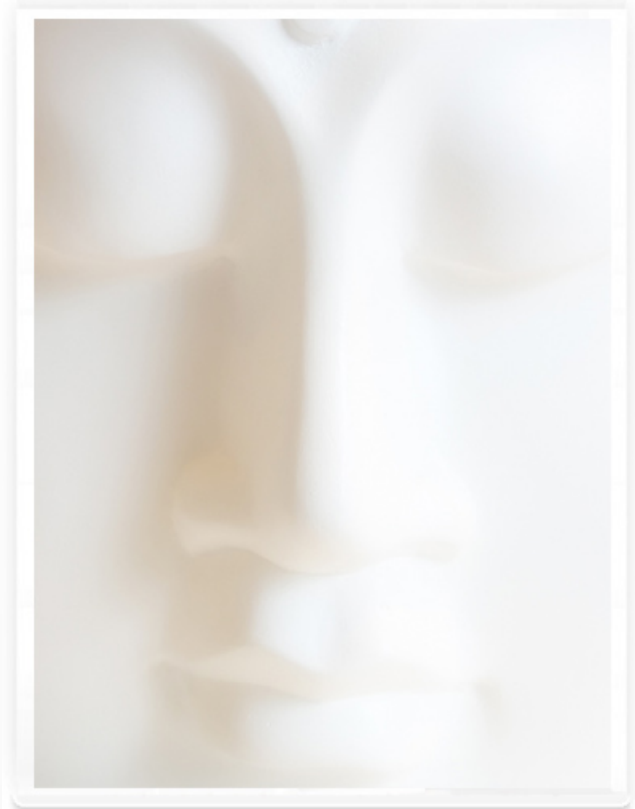
When you realize that your true nature as consciousness can't be harmed, that puts all of life's difficulties in perspective. Similarly, when someone's car is totaled in an accident but he or she isn't hurt, we consider that person lucky. This is because we have a perspective on the relative importance of damage to a car. It's not such a big deal relative to a serious physical injury or death. If you realize that you are aware space, then everything else is like the totaled car—no big deal.

Some things are still more important than others. Physical harm is still a bigger difficulty than harm to a car or other physical object. But by knowing that your true nature is space, which cannot be harmed, the bigger difficulties and even tragedies in life can be seen in perspective.

A simple question to ask is, "What effect does this experience have on my eternal soul?" And while everything leaves an impression on your awareness and your soul, nothing can ever permanently harm your soul, your true nature as empty awareness. In fact, every experience enriches your soul. Every moment adds to the depth and richness of your deepest knowing. We sense this in people who have faced a lot of difficulty in life and who have accepted their fate. There is a depth and wisdom that only comes from a wide range of experience, including painful and unwelcome experiences.

The willingness to meet and have any experience comes from the recognition that what you are is open, spacious awareness. Your body, mind, personality, emotions, and desires all appear within that awareness, but they are not you. And the real you cannot be harmed.

(From the free ebook: *That Is That: Essays About True Nature* available [here](#).)





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